

# Cover Sheet



Witness: First Witness Statement of Anthony Speed / HN1742

Exhibits Referred to: None

Date Statement Made: 10 August 2022

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**UNDERCOVER POLICING INQUIRY**

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**Witness:** Anthony Speed CBE QPM DL / HN1742

**Occupation:** Retired

**Address:** c/o Metropolitan Police Service, Directorate of Legal Services, Cobalt Square, 1 South Lambeth Road, London, SW8 1SU

1. I have been asked to provide a witness statement for the purpose of assisting the Undercover Policing Inquiry with matters relating to A8 in the Metropolitan Police Service. In preparing this statement I have sought to answer all the questions asked of me in the Rule 9 request dated 20 July 2022.
2. In the preparation of this witness statement, I have been shown MPS-0733126 and MPS-0748208, MPS-0733367, MPS-0748210. I have not refreshed my memory by looking at any other document.
3. There is no restriction order in place in respect of my real name. I did not use a cover name.

**Personal details**



4. My full name is Anthony James Speed. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1941.

## Police career

5. I joined the MPS as a Cadet in 1957 and then as a Police Constable in February 1960. My initial posting as a Constable was to Kings Cross Road Police Station. I was promoted to Police Sergeant in, I think, 1964 and posted to Brixton until 1968. I remained in uniform in this role.
  
6. In 1968, I was promoted to Station Sergeant. I was immediately posted to Aberystwyth as a personal protection officer for HRH Prince of Wales. This posting lasted until the following October, in 1969. A Special Branch officer called [2] [REDACTED] was posted there with me because he spoke Welsh; I needed someone with this skill because of the very real threat to the Prince of Wales at that time. [2] [REDACTED] linked in to the special team that had been set up in Shrewsbury by Commander Joc Wilson from the MPS to investigate the Free Welsh Army. I was under instructions from my boss in the Royal Protection Office not to have anything to do with the team in Shrewsbury and so I used [2] [REDACTED] as my conduit for any information about threats to the Prince of Wales or if back up was needed. Every now and again Commander Wilson would contact [2] [REDACTED] with information. I myself did not have a stream of Special Branch information. [2] [REDACTED] speaking Welsh was absolutely invaluable to me. I am sure there was more to the information obtained than I knew because of my lack of Special Branch involvement, but [2] [REDACTED] could become aware of things simply by listening to those speaking in Welsh; we might not otherwise have known about what was being discussed.



7. On return from Aberystwyth, I was posted to Gerald Road Police Station in a uniform role. As a Station Sergeant, you were often Acting Inspector and so took on the role of relief supervisor. I remained there for a year.
  
8. From 1970 to 1972, I was Clerk Sergeant in A8 (still of the rank Station Sergeant) which meant that I was the senior officer in charge of the A8 General Office in Scotland Yard. I was only the third person in this role. It was essentially an administrative function and meant that I got a feel for what A8 was about and saw everything that was going on. All correspondence pertaining to public order, in all forms, came to my desk and I then allocated it out to the various people on the staff. For example, if the correspondence concerned an event that someone was already dealing with I would forward it to them; if it was about a new event, I would allocate it to someone and instruct them to deal with it. All of A8's paperwork, including Special Branch assessments relating to events, protection threats and that kind of thing also went through me before going up the chain towards the Deputy Assistant Commissioner, then John Gerrard. Some documents would be intercepted by other senior officers in the chain of command – the Chief Inspector, Chief Superintendent or Commander – and so may not get as far as the Deputy Assistant Commissioner. Special Branch assessments on larger events such as demonstrations would reach the Deputy Assistant Commissioner. Where a draft operation order had been prepared, it would come through me to go up the chain of command. I did not interfere with decisions being made, for example by the Chief Inspector who was going out on the ground, but I would check that the operational order made sense and read correctly, that it was clear and that the detail was accurate. I did not really have any dealings

[REDACTED]

with Special Branch; paperwork from them would come through my desk and I would send it on to the appropriate person. Special Branch officers knew who I was and what I did and I might get the odd phone call from them to pass something on, but I did not have any formal dealings with Special Branch in this role.

9. In 1972 I was promoted to Inspector and posted to Vine Street Division. My role was essentially that of shift commander. It was a uniform role. Demonstrations outside embassies were frequent occurrences to be dealt with by the duty officer. During this posting, I had a brief period of six months on the Clubs and Vice Section in Soho.
  
10. Whilst an Inspector, I was also appointed Force Liaison Office to Lord Scarman's Inquiry into the events in Red Lion Square in 1974. Although I did not realise at the time, the Inquiry and particularly Lord Scarman's future recommendations were really important for me developmentally because of my career in public order policing. I was involved in both parts of the Inquiry and attended hearings daily on behalf of the MPS. It is difficult to say how long that involvement lasted, but each part was a matter of weeks rather than months. I went back to C District for a period in between. As Force Liaison Officer I worked closely with TSol to advise about witnesses and guide their investigation. TSol would check with me whether there was a subject area that police witnesses could cover. I would have been contacting Special Branch directly as part of the Inquiry to arrange witnesses, but I am not aware that I was receiving information from them. In the second part of the Inquiry, it was more a question of getting people within the

[REDACTED]

MPS to write papers about the future and I guided TSol on who to speak to within the MPS for this kind of evidence.

11. I was in charge of a series of 20 officers at the Notting Hill Carnival riots in 1976, which led to me being seconded to A8 to draft the report for the Home Office on the riots. The Home Secretary was our police authority and so whenever there was an event that resulted in disorder there would be a report to the Home Office from A8 or the Deputy Assistant Commissioner in charge of public order at Scotland Yard. It was A8's job to draft the report, which included collating information about arrests, damage to uniform officers, damage to property, etc.
  
12. Once the Home Office report was concluded, a vacancy arose in A8 and so I was promoted from Inspector to Chief Inspector. I was Chief Inspector in A8 from 1977 to 1980. My role was that of planning officer: the Commander or Deputy Assistant Commissioner was in overall command, and it was the Chief Inspector's role to plan operations for forthcoming demonstrations and assist with designing the operational plan before it was sent out in briefings. Occasionally as Chief Inspector I went out on the ground before a large event to provide specialist help and assist local senior officers with their planning. My involvement in operational planning for demonstration at Lewisham in 1977, which I outline below, is an example of this. I relied on Special Branch assessments for operational planning and I explain the importance of these assessments below, by reference also to the example of the event in Barkingside. It was the task of the Clerk Sergeant to get officers there on the day and they were responsible for the logistics of movement, equipment etc. As Chief Inspector I also supervised

[REDACTED]

ceremonial event planning and was involved in industrial unrest demonstrations, for example the demonstration where Arthur Scargill took people to the printworks march. Grunwick was also a daily issue as it could go from a couple of dozen people in attendance to a couple of thousand people because of attendance from mining communities and Scargill. Special Branch would give us this information by updating their assessment if they thought we needed it; they were providing us with information on a daily basis, and if it was important they would give it to us immediately, in person. During the period of the Grunwick dispute, we would brief and plan for an operation the next day, get up at 3am to get to Grunwick as we had a control room in the local school, return after the disorder ended by about 10am, and then plan for the following day.

13. In 1980, I was promoted to Superintendent. I was posted to the Clubs Office at West End Central Division which came with responsibility for all vice and licensing enquiries in Soho. This followed the Humphreys inquiry into corruption in CID regarding pornography, hence it being a responsibility of the Clubs Office. In this role, I oversaw the raid on, and eventual closure of, the Playboy casino.
14. Whilst Superintendent, I was Force Liaison Officer to Lord Scarman's Inquiry into the Brixton riots in 1981. I was seconded from the Clubs Office to the Inquiry in that I worked on the Inquiry by day and returned to the Clubs Office at night. Again, I was involved in both parts of the Inquiry: it was about six weeks for the first part, and then probably three to four weeks for the second part on future recommendations.



15. I was promoted to Chief Superintendent in 1982 and sent to set up a new training section at Hendon specifically to deal with public order. A new public order training department called D15 was formed under Assistant Commissioner Training. The Scarman report was extremely valuable and undoubtedly set a course for us: Lord Scarman said it was the police's job to contain disorder, not to provoke it or be part of the problem. The strategy was one of control rather than dispersal, for example by using water cannons and tear gas, because that causes you to lose control. Lord Scarman recommended training for senior officers and I was effectively implementing this by setting up D15. All senior officers of and above the rank of Chief Inspector had to go on these courses at D15. I ran about 50 percent of the training and we had visiting speakers. We developed the first computer aided public order exercise for police officers: we would control the resources available, and they had to respond. Under my supervision, David Cansdale was involved in the purchase and design of a city at Hounslow where we could also train officers, for example, to practice with riot shields and equipment. I was not aware why I was asked to take on this training role as opposed to someone else. My reputation in public order policing must have been relevant. I was not 'Mr Public Order' because it was a team thing, but there was a feeling by that stage of having established myself in the field in people saying that I should be there to assist on public order issues. I was in this role for two years, to the end of 1983.

16. I was then posted to take charge of Brixton Division. I was Divisional Commander at Brixton and responsible for implementing the neighbourhood policing scheme which was another recommendation by Lord Scarman. Half of the division were



[REDACTED]

frightened to go out on the streets in Brixton and half wanted to provoke a re-run of the riot. I was very fortunate because there were two bright Inspectors who had been sent on the graduate scheme and they wrote a joint paper at their end of their degrees about a new system of policing which they designed involving sector policing, community policing and neighbourhood watch. They brought it to me and I thought it would change policing for years to come. Consultation with the local community was unheard of. I seized this as manna from heaven and implemented it. This new system of community policing was a joint programme with Surrey constabulary and was independently assessed, and subsequently implemented nationwide. It was the beginning of sector policing.

17. From March to October 1985, I attended the Senior Command Course at the National Police College. There was then a Force reorganisation under Ken Newman. We were moving over to Borough policing and so there were no promotions available at that time. I was sent to M District (Southwark) as Acting Commander to sit there for six months during the reorganisation before the role disappeared.
18. I was formally promoted to Commander in 1986 and put in charge of specialist training at Hendon Training School. This included the Detective training school, driver training, telecommunications, public order and riot control, and service firearms training. With the implementation of community policing, we introduced a new style of collaborative management across the MPD which involved Constables in local decision-making. I oversaw the management training wing responsible for the implementation of the new management resource centre and

[REDACTED]

training the team of consultants within that centre who went out into divisions to support senior divisional teams to implement this new style of management.

19. From March 1988 until September 1989, I was Commander (Support) and then Commander Ops for the Central Area. In these roles I was responsible for personnel, training and discipline.
  
20. From September 1989 to September 1990, I was Commander (Territorial Operations). There had been a reorganisation and A Department was disbanded. A Department was renamed Territorial Operations, and what was A8 became TO(20). Commander (Territorial Operations) was the equivalent of Commander A8 and so I was the head of the operations. I reported to Deputy Assistant Commissioner (Territorial Operations) (formerly known as Deputy Assistant Commissioner A (Operations)). Amongst other things, I was involved in co-ordinating the response to the Marchioness Disaster on the River Thames (which had occurred the day before I started in post) and implementing Lord Justice Taylor's recommendations to improve safety at sports stadiums. 1990 was also the year of the Poll Tax riots, although I think I was away on holiday as I do not remember being involved.
  
21. Thereafter, I was promoted to Deputy Assistant Commissioner. From 1990 to 1993, I was in charge of 8 Area (Westminster). In this role, I had oversight of uniform police and CID.



22. In 1993 to 1994, I was Director of Police Personnel Management. Paul Condon had been appointed Commissioner and was under budgetary pressures, so I was sent to Personnel Management to deal with the personnel issues connected to Force restructuring.
  
23. In 1994, I was promoted to Assistant Commissioner and put in charge of 1 Area (Central) which covered the City of Westminster, the Royal Boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, and the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. Again, I had oversight of uniform police and CID. By this time, Territorial operations had been disbanded following the reorganisation under Paul Condon and Assistant Commissioners had portfolio responsibilities. Mine was public order in all its aspects – football, training, political demonstrations, ceremonial events – vice, and licensing. In theory my portfolio was London-wide, but there was a tension when large demonstrations took place in one of the other four areas within the MPD because it would come under the general responsibility of that area's Assistant Commissioner, with their budget and their own accountability. I inherited a number of small departments to manage the public order portfolio including the mounted branch, specialist training, and what used to be known as A8/TO(20). I do not now remember what it was called after the reorganisation, perhaps just Public Order Department. It fulfilled the same function as A8 and was headed by Commander Public Order. I had operational oversight over events including Princess Diana's funeral. We sought Special Branch assessments for that. Other than the Notting Hill Carnival, probably the biggest event I dealt with in this role was the Trafalgar Square Defence Committee's annual celebration of the Poll Tax riots. Peter Imbert wanted to ban it and I was

[REDACTED]

called up to give my view. I was against banning the event: I said that not only would I have to police disorder, but I would also have to enforce the ban. I said that if the event was allowed to run I would put tremendous police resources in place and I worked daily with officers to ensure it would not be policed by dispersal. In the end, there was no disorder. We would have received Special Branch assessments, for example concerning likely turnout, mood, and whether there would be opposition.

24. From 1997 until retirement, I was also Chairman of the ACPO Public Order Sub-Committee which had national responsibility for public order policing strategy separate to Special Branch. We did not use any intelligence provided by undercover police officers. At this time, there were cutbacks in staffing levels in Special Branch and one of my concerns as Chairman of ACPO was where that would leave public order policing and whether it would take a back seat in Special Branch. Special Branch had a lot of other things it was involved in, for example with the Security Service. We were also pressing for a public order intelligence unit to be taken over by the uniform officers.
25. I was also a member of the 1998 international team of public order experts examining public order policing in South Africa. The team was headed by the Dutch. We visited South Africa, observed what was going on and made recommendations to the South African police.
26. I retired in February 1999 in the rank of Assistant Commissioner after 39 years' service.



27. I was awarded a Queen's Police Medal in the Birthday Honours List in 1991. That recommendation was based almost entirely on my community work in Brixton. I was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 1999 New Year Honours List for services to public order policing.

#### **A8**

28. I am fairly certain A8 was formed under then Superintendent Ken Newman in 1968, in time for the October Vietnam demonstration. It was known as A8 at that time. The March demonstration was such a problem, and the October demonstration was advertised that summer as 'The Revolution', so I am almost certain that A8 was formed over the summer to deal with the latter event. As a Sergeant at Brixton, I was part of a serial sent to the October demonstration. We were put on a bus to Hendon before the event and given generic training by Ken Newman. It was very low-level stuff like showing us how to get on and off a bus quickly and how to form various types of cordon, but it was the first time I remember being brought together with other serials before an event. This was an A8 coordinated operation, which is why I am fairly certain as to the timing of A8's formation. Before this, the policing response was amateur: police turned up to events on public transport with a sandwich in their back pocket.

29. A8 had responsibility for public order policing for events in the broadest sense in London. These included political demonstrations and protests, community disorder which might be local but nothing to do with politics per se, trade disputes such as Grunwick, lobbying of Parliament, sporting events, annual ceremonial

[REDACTED]

events such as Trooping the Colour, state events like the opening of Parliament and Remembrance Sunday.

30. A8's role/function was to monitor events throughout London and to plan for the policing of events that would be beyond the resources of local divisions. A8 provided operational policing and brought together officers – ranging in number from a few hundred to several thousand – from all over London. In this regard, A8 was essentially a central unit. An event might be beyond the local division's resources due to complexity or the number of attendees expected; whatever the reason, A8 would be responsible for planning the policing operation and dealing with everything for the operation from briefings, to vehicles, to catering. The document entitled "Appendix A: Suggested Manpower for 27.4.1980" (MPS-0733126, p.27) is a good example of the level of resources that would be beyond a division's capabilities. For reference, if an event was beyond a local Commander's resources, it would also be beyond any provincial police force's resources. The suggested manpower is of at least 37 serials across the various stated locations. A serial always consists of one Inspector, two Sergeants and 20 Constables. If there is a third Sergeant in the serial, that is the jailor Sergeant for any arrests. Post-Broadwater Farm, we would not have had this number of senior officers present because a gold, silver, bronze command structure was implemented.

31. A8 also monitored smaller events throughout London, notwithstanding we would not be involved with them. These smaller events would go in the A8 diary so that

[REDACTED]

we would know not to call on the local division policing the event for policing assistance elsewhere.

32. One of Lord Scarman's recommendations was that organisers inform the police about demonstrations. In the rest of the country, Chief Constables had a duty to apply to the Secretary of State to ban a demonstration if they did not have sufficient resources ~~to apply~~ to police it peacefully. However, in the MPD, the Commissioner had to decide whether or not to apply to the Home Office. The MPS could hardly say we did not have sufficient resources. It was never an option for us to say we could not police, whereas Chief Constables around the country did do that more readily.
  
33. In the 1970s, A8 consisted of a Chief Superintendent, Superintendent, Chief Inspector, Inspector, Clerk Sergeant, three Sergeants and three or four Constables – there were 11 or 12 officers in total. The numbers might have increased over the years. A8 reported in to Deputy Assistant Commissioner A (Operations). It was common for the Chief Superintendent to report directly to the Deputy Assistant Commissioner, but the chain of command included a Commander in between those ranks.
  
34. A8 was active in the policing of events in the sense that we would be involved in organising the operational response, select and appoint the senior officers all over London who would be on the event, staff the control room at Scotland Yard (which was adjacent to the information room) and would be involved in the operational command. A8 Chief Inspector would be the staff officer. All A8

[REDACTED]

operations involved getting in touch with uniform divisions for the supply of manpower; the traffic division for road diversions; the transport department, who provided coaches to transport large numbers of police officers; the communications department for the supply of personal radios to those of Inspector rank and above, and to set up and staff the control room; the catering department. We were conscious that A8 had the levers of the whole force if required, but we had to approach each department or division individually.

35. A8 did not have its own officers to send out to police public disorder. At some stage in the late 1960s/early 1970s, the Special Patrol Group was formed. They never came under A8 – it was probably A8(2) – but they came under the same Commander, Commander A8. The Special Patrol Group were our mobile reserve in the same that they were available to A8 eventually at Scotland Yard.
36. A8 had liaison with Special Branch for assessments, which I explain further below. We also had liaison with CID until the reorganisation under Robert Mark. Information from CID would come throughout. The reorganisation resulted in CID being amalgamated with uniform police and from then we had a Detective Inspector posted to A8 who shared the office with our Chief Inspector.
37. We relied on others to give us 'intelligence'. Apart from a football intelligence unit and information that was obtained from local divisions, for example about the community response to an event, A8 had no means of gathering information and intelligence itself. A8 did not receive information from the Security Service. We knew Special Branch would get information from them: we often said we



[REDACTED]

wondered if Special Branch officers knew that they worked for the Commissioner rather than the Security Service, but in reality that of course was not the case. I think the relationship between the Security Service and Special Branch was much the same as Special Branch's relationship with us: we were never subservient to Special Branch, and I am sure if you asked a Special Branch officer they would say they did not regard themselves as in the pocket of the Security Service.

### **A8 files and documents**

38. There might be 400 demonstrations in a year in central London, varying from a two-man picket to large scale demonstrations. As soon as we knew about an event, someone in A8 would open a file. The file would contain anything that came in from the local division, anything from the transport section about coaches bringing people to the event, any Special Branch information or assessments. Everything about the event would be in the possession of the planning officer.
39. A8 did not draw up its own assessments about upcoming events. Because we were using all the information we could get from wherever we could get it, we were conscious there was valuable information to be obtained from elsewhere. Whoever was doing the operational planning would keep notes, I suppose, when discussing what was likely to happen. There were no formal A8 reports. If information was received that was to cause a change to operations, this would be dealt with verbally.

[REDACTED]

40. A8 would send a report to the Home Office after any event where there was disorder, violence, many arrests or media interest which necessitated the Home Office being informed about what happened. The report would be sent regardless of the extent of the disorder. The Home Office might also request a report from us and we would then send it without issue. The Home Secretary (and the Home Office) was our police authority. The report was for their information as they were likely to be questioned in Parliament about the event, they might have to make a statement about it and the Prime Minister might have to be briefed on it or answer questions at Prime Minister's Questions. I do not recall A8 reporting to the Home Office before the event had taken place but there must have been from time-to-time enquiries by the Home Office or on behalf of the Home Secretary by letter or telephone that would have to be answered. The Home Office report after the event was a very definite requirement but communicating with the Home Office prior to the event was not a requirement. The Home office report would contain a narration of everything that happened at the end and a large number of appendices which detailed, for example, the number of members of the public injured, damage to private property, damage to police property, the number of arrests. The officer drafting the report would have the benefit of A8's file containing the accumulated information and assessments about the event. There would be a verbal de-brief of officers involved on the day and its contents would be included in the report. Information from the A8(10) proforma would feed into the appendices to the report. I designed the A8(10) proforma when I was Clerk Sergeant in A8. The form was handed to each serial Inspector so that we could collate accurate information from the event. It was used for every A8 operation. The control room log would show where the serials were deployed and when and

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we could see from the A8(10) form who was on duty, where and who they came into contact with. The form contained all of the officers' personal details, the time they paraded, which local divisions they came from, any changes in deployment, whether the reserves were engaged at all and details of any persons moved out from reserve centres and deployed, any arrests and where the arrested persons were taken, any damage to property (mainly police uniforms or clothing belonging to members of the public) that the officers became aware of, and any injuries to members of the public or police officers. The form forced Inspectors to de-brief their officers and provide us with the requested information about the event. This form was the main source of record keeping from the day. As well as feeding into the appendices of A8's report to the Home Office, the information in the A8(10) would assist in any subsequent enquiry by the Complaints Investigation Bureau and any allegation of misconduct arising from policing on the day. This process remained the same throughout my involvement in A8.

41. A8's files went to the general registry for filing. File numbers were allocated by the registry rather than by A8 and began with "GR".

#### **Special Branch assessments**

42. A8 received reports from Special Branch which we called 'assessments' or 'Special Branch assessments'. There were two kinds: reports prior to an event which would set out what it was, when it would take place, how many people would be in attendance, and reports that were much more specific, for example, about an individual or an embassy. These assessments were fed into our planning and they were extremely valuable. Either the boss or a planning officer

[REDACTED]

would request the Special Branch assessment: you would not want to go to the Deputy Assistant Commissioner with operational plans without a Special Branch assessment, or without at least saying that you had asked for one

43. There were various circumstances in which we would seek or receive Special Branch assessments. Special Branch might inform us about something and we would note it and then send a formal request back for an assessment in due course. If it was more urgent than that – for example, we are getting information from an embassy that a demonstration is anticipated – we might telephone Special Branch and ask for an urgent assessment.
  
44. In addition, a local division might advise us of a demonstration that they were going to deal with themselves. A8 would review the information and then ask Special Branch for an assessment – a second opinion as to whether they thought the demonstration could get bigger, whether it would be violent, whether it would be opposed etc. The local division concerned would also obtain their own intelligence, for example asking coach companies how many coaches had been hired for the event, but that information might also be obtained by Special Branch. Special Branch would then produce the assessment and it would reach my desk via internal post or an officer would deliver it personally. If the Special Branch assessment was of a negative type, for example there would be little interest in the event or numbers would be low, and it confirmed what the local division had said then it would simply be noted, the event put in the A8 diary and policing of the event left to the local division. As stated above, A8's involvement was determined by whether the policing response was likely to be beyond the

[REDACTED]

resources of the local division. That would probably be assessed in parallel with the Special Branch assessment. For example, the local division might say that they can handle an event, the Special Branch assessment might say otherwise and we would then tell the local division diplomatically that they needed help. If Special Branch said there might be an issue and the local division wanted to handle the policing but I knew, for example, that there was a situation such as a football game on the same day which might make it worse I would discuss this with the local division and inform them about the reserves available in the event of trouble or we would say it required A8 involvement.

45. If the Special Branch assessment was not negative, it would go up the chain of command. How far it would go up the chain of command would be determined by the filtering process. In the 1960s and 1970s, the assessment was only likely to go all the way up the chain of command if it was known there was likely to be disorder or the event was likely to impinge on something else taking place, for example a ceremonial event, a football game, Pavarotti singing in the park. When I was Commander, the Chief Superintendent would take me through the weekend events at the Friday operations meeting and questions would be asked from a senior level. It was like a briefing.
  
46. The report of 26 March 1980 (MPS-0733126, pp.6-9) appears to be a Special Branch assessment prepared regarding the upcoming Friends of Blair Peach demonstration on 27 April 1980. I was not in A8 at this time, but I offer some general comments about the document based on my time in A8. This report exemplifies the extent of the information Special Branch provided us and the

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lengths to which Special Branch went to be of assistance. Paragraph 10 of the report is a good example of a Special Branch assessment of the ambition of the organisers, of whatever political persuasion. A8 was interested in public tranquillity rather than the politics of the event in question. Lord Scarman was right that those organising demonstrations ought to tell the police about them beforehand, but the police also had to find a way to test the ambition otherwise we would be running around like headless chickens. Paragraph 11 is an example of how Special Branch arrived at their assessments, their reasoning and consideration of wider issues. Special Branch was politically minded; they understood what was making society tick and so I consider they were well-placed to make assessments based on wider issues. We took Special Branch assessments at face value – particularly like this one concerning the Friends of Blair Peach demonstration – which contains detailed thoughts on the issues.

47. If A8 was organising the police response for an event, we would meet with the organisers of the event and send a letter afterwards similar to that addressed to Michael Carver of the Friends of Blair Peach Campaign (MPS-0733126, p.26). That letter is confirmation to the organisers of what was agreed at the meeting between the organisers and the local division.
  
48. Usually there would be a briefing on the Friday before the event for officers of the rank of Inspector and above. They would be dragged in from across the Force by the operation order. The Inspectors would be the officers leading a serial at the event. The briefing would explain what was going to happen. It is likely to be the first they would know about the operation. The Senior Ground Commander would

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go through the tactics for the day and drill down to the level of detail of what each serial should be doing, the time and place of parade, when and where radios should be picked up, assigning a time to report on the ground, and where to pick up the A8(10) proforma to debrief the serial. A senior Special Branch officer might come over to speak to the senior ground Commander before this briefing with any up-to-date information. The Special Branch officer might attend the briefing as well, for example in the event of questions from the floor that he could answer or if actions were required. I cannot remember if this happened in my time. I cannot now remember the names of any Special Branch officers, let alone their faces. For really big events, Special Branch might put a liaison officer in the control room with us.

49. Special Branch provided us with up-to-date information, all the way up to and during events. They had officers on the ground to monitor, for example, what speakers were saying at the demonstrations. For big events, where there were thousands in attendance, Special Branch would update their assessments as they received further information. The update would come automatically, but if it had not been received we would ask for one. The report of 23 April 1980 regarding the march and demonstration organised by the Friends of Blair Peach Campaign (MPS-0733126, p.29) is an example of an update assessment. Paragraph 1 indicates that the demonstration was taking place on a Sunday and so the report came on the Thursday. This would have come in time for the main briefing before the event. It is likely that the Special Branch officer brought the update assessment across with him. If I was doing the briefing, I would ask the Chief Superintendent to give the update orally.



50. Aside from these examples, communications with Special Branch were generally in the normal way via the staff officer.
  
51. Special Branch had its own hierarchy and a different Assistant Commissioner to us, A8. There was not a single liaison officer. We sent things to the Special Branch office and they would disseminate it as they saw fit. When I was Chief Inspector, Special Branch assessments would come to my office, the Clerk Sergeant would give them to me and I would inform my seniors. Senior officers in Special Branch would also deal with my senior officers directly. Depending on the severity of the assessment, a senior Special Branch officer might come to see the A8 Chief Superintendent, Commander or Deputy Assistant Commissioner. If Special Branch had concerns, they would go to the A8 Chief Superintendent or up to the Commander who would then liaise with the Commander of the local district. The district Commander would come to Scotland Yard and meet with the A8 Commander to discuss the event, any concerns and operational matters. If it was a really big demonstration, the Deputy Assistant Commissioner would take command of the day and be shown as in command in the operational order. He would have several senior officers in his command.
  
52. I do not recall forwarding Special Branch assessments to the Home Office when I was Commander. I once had a call from Michael Howard, then Home Secretary, asking if I thought things would be alright and I said yes.





53. At the time I was never conscious of the Special Branch assessment coming in a standard form. It came on A4 paper and appeared like a normal report. Its length would depend on the circumstances: it could be between half a page, up to a couple pages. The report would be from a middle ranking officer, with a senior officer's signature. The assessment of 26 March 1980 concerning the Friends of Blair Peach demonstration (MPS-0733126, pp.6-9) exemplifies this: it is the Detective Inspector's report and signed by the Chief Superintendent. It was incumbent on the Chief Superintendent, having signed it, to send the report back to his officer if he disagrees with any of it. It was as much his report as it was the Inspector's. Posters and such documents about the upcoming event would often be picked up by local uniform police and attached to the Special Branch assessment, as appears to have happened with the above assessment (see MPS-0733126 pp.10-12, and minute 2 on p.1) The Chief Superintendent would minute the report and then bring it to us. There might be additional comment on the minute sheet from the Chief Superintendent. Sometimes there was no minute sheet and the minute would be on the report itself. Pages 1-2 of MPS-0733126 are a typical minute sheet that we would receive. It shows the hierarchy, the lengths Special Branch would go to in order to get the information, the typical kind of information we would receive and the to-ing and fro-ing with Special Branch. The Special Branch minute sheet would indicate whether their assessment went to the Home Office.

54. I do not recall assessments going back to Special Branch once they had been received. I cannot think of a reason why we would do that. I do not recall giving Special Branch any feedback but I suppose it is possible that they phoned us up,

[REDACTED]

for example if they got the assessment wrong. We spent a lot of money putting a lot of police officers out based on their assessments.

55. Information sharing was one way: A8 only received information from Special Branch. We were a customer. A8 did not provide information to Special Branch. Information might be included in the request we made of them – for example, information is coming in that there will be a march on Saturday in Clapham, please can we have your assessment? – but that would be it.

56. I do not remember seeing anything like the document entitled “proposed arrangements for demonstrations and public events” (MPS-0733126, pp.22-25). I think it is a document from the ceremonial office at Cannon Row. The officer signing for the Chief Superintendent on the final page is Sergeant <sup>3</sup> [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] John Cracknell, Commander A District, has then sent the document to A8. The document is then being circulated within Special Branch: the top of the first page is headed, in handwritten form, “Ch. Supt. ‘C’ Squad”. If it was an A8 form, it would have an A8 reference on it. The proforma that Inspectors on serials used was A8(10) and the reference numbers did not go higher than that. A8 must have been involved in this demonstration: the police estimate of the number of people likely to support the demonstration is 2,000 (p.23) and so policing the demonstration will have beyond the resources of Commander A District.

57. Special Branch did not always get their assessments right. I cannot say how many times Special Branch were right, but they got it right far more than they got it wrong – both in saying that something was not going to happen and the event

[REDACTED]

would be okay, and in saying that it would be bad. Their assessments were right enough of the time for us to rely on them. Occasionally they would overstate matters, for example saying that an event would be bad, but it was not because other factors out of anyone's control came into play such as the weather. I cannot think of a specific example where an assessment understated a demonstration. However, when it occasionally happened, we had the Special Patrol Group in reserve so we could still respond. There were a lot of reasons why violence could be sparked and which Special Branch could not foresee.

### **Involvement in Lewisham**

58. As Chief Inspector, I was involved in the operational planning for the demonstration in Lewisham in 1977. The local Superintendent was (later Sir) John Smith. He called me to say that there would be a demonstration at a school near Clifton Rise and asked me to come and look at it with him. I forget the detail due to the passage of time, but I think the National Front was due to have a meeting in a school and the fear locally was that there would be disorder as the left-wing would turn up to disrupt the meeting and cause disorder on the street. I left Scotland Yard and spent the day with John Smith, walking around and assessing how many police officers he might need according to the level of disorder. I came away and designed the operational order for him. We had input from Special Branch for Lewisham, but I cannot now remember the detail of what that was. On return to A8 I would have reported back to senior officers what was happening and requested a Special Branch assessment because it would help me to decide whether it would be an operation with no disorder or possible disorder or a really violent incident. We needed to get it right because it would be

[REDACTED]

dragging police officers away from duties across London, or we might need mutual aid from other forces. Special Branch was a very important resource for information: it allowed me to plan. For Lewisham, Special Branch forecasted disorder and our policing response was correct. There was still violent disorder, but we were prepared for it. As a result of what John Smith was picking up from local community contacts and what Special Branch was saying, we situated uniform police in certain locations so that we could better deal with the policing response.

59. I have been shown the Memorandum of a meeting in A8 on 27 July 1977 regarding the demonstration to be held in Lewisham on 13 August 1977

(MPS-0748210). My name features in the list of attendees. This meeting can best be described as a strategy meeting rather than a briefing of the kind I describe above. The content of the document indicates that the Commissioner was already under considerable pressure from parties such as the Church and the Mayor who were opposing the National Front march. It is likely that Assistant Commissioner A Department Gibson felt it necessary to discuss the issue and firm up his own views as to whether he should be advising the Commissioner to impose a ban. The meeting is amongst the most senior officers to discuss the proposals and petitions by local people which are mentioned in the Memorandum. It is extremely unusual for an Assistant Commissioner to become involved and so there is no doubt in my mind that the reason Gibson called the meeting is because there was pressure from all sides, and probably from the government, for the police to ban the demonstration. A8 would provide their views on a potential ban and implement any decision. There were big implications if a

[REDACTED]

ban was put in place: we would have to police any demonstration that occurred in contravention of the ban, and enforce the ban itself. I remember the Bishop supported local people to make an application to the High Court to force the Commissioner to ban this demonstration. This is referred to at paragraph 6 of the report of 13 August 1977 (MPS-0733367, p.2). I vividly remember being present at court with the MPS solicitor to defend the challenge, which failed.

60. The Memorandum also records Commander A7 in attendance. A7 was the Community Liaison branch, and they would be relevant to the imposition of a ban. Two Special Branch Inspectors are also listed as attendees. They would have been invited along because further assessments would be requested of Special Branch after the meeting, for example, upon further consideration of the ban and seeking their views as to what the likely impact of a ban would be. There is nothing significant about it being a Memorandum by Roy Creamer of Special Branch: it is his report to his senior officers about what happened at the meeting. One would expect a similar report for A Department's records. This meeting might be one of a number of meetings and Gibson would have insisted it would be documented. He would likely have had a staff officer present for that purpose, or it could be that Commander A8 took notes of the meeting. That would depend on who was in attendance and their seniority.

61. Based on the date of this meeting, A8 would already have been in the operational planning stages for the demonstration. Our planning would also be based on the content of meetings like this. It is likely there were further strategy meetings of this kind, plus the briefing on the Friday before.



62. I have been referred to a number of minute sheets relating to Lewisham which run from 29 July 1977 to 2 February 1979 **(MPS-0748208)** and make a number of comments below.
63. It is clear from minute 4 **(MPS-0748208, p.1-2)** that in the days leading up to the demonstration the scene was set for disorder and we were all expecting it to be really bad. The minute makes reference to "the last episode in Lewisham recently": I cannot remember what this is referring to.
64. Minute 5 **(MPS-0748208, p.2-3)** shows how crucial Special Branch was for us, A8. They were busy working and trying to find out the tactics of the National Front so that they could assess the extent of the violence, right up to the demonstration itself. I can see from the minute that copies of two "SB report[s]" at 4A and 5A are being sent to A8 and to the Home Office, and Special Branch's E Squad and particular officers are "to see". I cannot seem to find a copy of the reports at folios 4A or 5A in this composite file, but the minute is bound to be referring to copies of the Special Branch assessment being sent to the Home Office and to A8. I cannot see what else it would be referring to.
65. Minute 8 **(MPS-0748208, p.4)** is dated 12 August 1977, the day before the demonstration. This would be too late for us to do anything in terms of operational plans as the officers would already have been briefed and the operation would be in place. Once the briefing was done, we were set. It is likely that a Special Branch officer was invited to the briefing and he would have been asked to

[REDACTED]

provide any up-to-date information orally. It is likely that the information in this minute and accompanying report would have been provided at the briefing and this is simply it being provided afterwards in written form. If we had not been provided with information by the time of the briefing and it was new information which impacted upon our operational plans, we would have had to handle it from the control room during the event.

66. Minute 15 [REDACTED (MPS-0748208, p.5)] is Special Branch sending a copy of their report and appendices at 15A to the Security Service, the Home Office and A8. It was normal for us to receive a report from Special Branch after a large event as they would have men on the ground. Their report would deal with bigger picture issues such as the strategic handling of the event, who was organising what, who was bringing weapons or tear gas in, rumours about future events, what the mood was and matters like that. We would get information from the police serials about what they did from the A8(10) proforma. I do not know what is meant in the minute by "unreferenced appendices" and it seems strange to me that more information is being sent to the Security Service than to the Home Office and A8. Special Branch was within the MPS and the Home Office was our police authority. Special Branch did not work for the Security Service.

67. I have been shown the Special Branch report dated 13 August 1977 and appendices at 15A [REDACTED (MPS-0733367)] which concerns the events in Lewisham. The report provides a good description of what happened that day. It is typical of the kind of report we would receive from Special Branch after the event and contains the main narrative of what happened as they saw it. The



report does not, however, have the facility of looking at serial reports and reports of charge centres to know exactly how many prisoners there were, how many police officers were injured and how much damage there was to property.

68. A8 would not have had any information about banners at the demonstration, as set out in Appendices A-C. This information could be of interest to us but was not highly significant. The list of banners at Appendix A shows how much support there was from the various organisations in attendance. It seems unusual to see this number of organisations and different banners. In my experience, you would not get this number even at a trade union demonstration.

69. The list in Appendix D of persons arrested would be compiled by Special Branch from various sources. Our charge centres are likely to be the main source of this information, but Special Branch could also have contacted A8 in the control room for information about individuals who went into local police stations. It does not surprise me that Special Branch did not give the number of arrests: the A8 report to the Home Office would have the final, definitive number of arrests. A8 would have CID officers on the ground under the supervision of a senior officer to deal with more serious charges, for example the GBH on page 1 of Appendix F

(MPS-0733367, p.34). We would inform C Department at the planning stage so that they can appoint a senior CID officer. That officer would organise Appendix B or C of the main operation order to show how many CID officers would be on the ground, where they would be situated and the command structure that would be in place. There was so much valuable evidence that could be lost if a scene was not secured quickly and properly. Other charges – assault on police, breach of



[REDACTED]

the peace, criminal damage, possession of an offensive weapon and the like – would be dealt with by serial officers. The minute sheet indicates A8 was not sent Appendices D and E which I assume is because it is likely to be information we already had, but then Appendix F is also probably duplication yet the minute sheet indicates that was sent to us.

70. Minute 18 [MPS-0748208, p.6] is from the Deputy Assistant Commissioner to the Assistant Commissioner Crime. I did not think the latter had any interest in demonstrations so I am very pleased to see this. The Deputy Assistant Commissioner says: "You may wish to see this file as an indicator of the valuable work being performed by SB in the field of public order, + of our very close working relationship with 'A' Dept". This comment must be a reference principally to A8 as it fell within A Department. It might also be a reference to A7, who were responsible for community relations, but otherwise there is no one else of relevance it could be referring to.

71. Although missing a date, minute 23 [MPS-0748208, p.6] refers to a Special Branch report which would come to A8. We would then put it together with the Senior Ground Officer's report and draft our report to the Home Office.

72. Minute 24 [MPS-0748208, p.7] refers to "DAC A Ops" who was our boss. This minute appears to be referring to an internal Special Branch report by Superintendent Dixon and Special Branch's views have been shared with the Deputy Assistant Commissioner A (Operations) after the event. This would not have been an ordinary occurrence. This was an out of the ordinary demonstration

[REDACTED]

given the violence and the extent of the work that we put in beforehand to try and prevent it from occurring. I note the minute refers to the SDS; as I explain below, "SDS" does not mean anything to me.

### **Relationship between A8 and Special Branch**

73. Our relationship with Special Branch was much the same as our relationship with any other department, whether CID or traffic. Special Branch were specialists in their own field, and we relied on them to do their job. They had their own structures and hierarchies and were independent in a sense, although we all worked for the Commissioner and so we were all pulling in the same direction. There was never any tension between A8 and Special Branch. The policing response was very much left to A8, but that C Squad was provided with a copy of the proposed arrangements for the Friends of Blair Peach demonstration and event on 27 April 1980 (MPS-0733126, pp.22) suggests that we kept Special Branch informed.

74. We in A8 could not have done our job without the Special Branch assessments. Quite frankly, we could not begin to design an operational plan until we knew *where the demonstration was taking place, how many people would turn up, the expected violence and whether there was to be any opposition.* Once we knew this, we were able to talk about the number of uniform officers and the command structure required. This is why we relied upon Special Branch. There were a number of events which involved around 3,000 uniform officers and this policing response was based upon the assessments we received from Special Branch. The information Special Branch provided was imperative. We could not plan to

[REDACTED]

the standard we did without it. It cut both ways: without the information, we would be understaffed when in violent situations but more often than not we would err on the side of caution and continually overstaff to the extent that large numbers of policing would be drawn from normal patrols and on reserve across London and that would not be tolerated. The information from Special Branch enabled us to strike the balance. I think our model worked. MPS-0733126 is also a good example of how A8 used the information provided by Special Branch and the value of it.

75. When I was Chief Inspector of A8, I was involved in a large National Front meeting, demonstration or march in Barkingside. Due to the passage of time, I cannot remember exactly what it was or when it was. A report came to me via the General Office from local Commander Mulvahill that he had this right-wing event and he was going to police it with his own resources, perhaps five serials (100 uniform officers), and said he did not need aid. I took it to the Commander and he said we had better get a Special Branch assessment. Their assessment said the event was going to take place, it would be much larger, very provocative, the left-wing would turn up to oppose it and it would be violent. Special Branch gave us some indication, in broad terms, of the numbers likely to be involved and so we knew it would be hard to manage. I was sent out immediately by my Commander to see the local Commander to drive around the route, assess it for buildings (such as shopping centres, schools) that would be at risk and see what was needed for the policing response. A senior Special Branch officer was in and out of the A8 Deputy Assistant Commissioner's office throughout the planning process. The event got bigger and bigger and the local Commander was taken

[REDACTED]

into a different league – to perhaps 4,000 uniform officers – and even then there was violent disorder on the day. Without Special Branch’s involvement, we would have had no idea about the event getting bigger. What I saw during the planning stage merely confirmed what the local Commander had said, but once I got the Special Branch assessment – which was eventually supported by an awful lot of information which came in from coach companies who were transporting people to London to oppose the event – we were led to the conclusion that it would be a much bigger event. It turned out to be as big as Special Branch said it would be, and it was violent. This example is indicative of how we came to rely upon Special Branch assessments. There was no formal ‘pat on the back’, but I have no doubt that Deputy Assistant Commissioner Gerrard would have got in touch with the Special Branch Deputy Assistant Commissioner and said “thanks for that”.

76. Some of the information Special Branch provided to us was not only central to public order but also saved lives. The IRA was bombing central London and we depended on Special Branch for information about security matters in order to prevent this and to prevent violence. Animal rights groups were also particularly violent. It is easy now to look back on it out of context, but their information really was crucial.

#### **Knowledge of the Special Demonstration Squad**

77. “SDS” does not mean anything particular to me: I am not familiar with it. To me Special Branch and the SDS are one and the same; the various Special Branch squads were a mystery to me. I had no knowledge of the SDS during my career nor did I have any contact or dealings with them.



78. Accordingly, as far as I am aware, A8 did not obtain intelligence from the SDS. I did not have any detailed knowledge of how Special Branch got their intelligence for assessments. Special Branch would often say that information came from a "delicate and reliable source" and we used to laugh about it in A8. We never knew what this meant. We assumed that Special Branch had a department which dealt with public order and that they had informants, undercover officers and technical sources, but without experience as a Special Branch officer I did not have any greater knowledge or detail of it.

79. I cannot say that I remember Lord Scarman being made aware that undercover officers from the SDS or Special Branch attended the demonstrations at Red Lion Square. I would be surprised if he was not told. At the time I was not aware of the existence of the SDS so I would not have known about their attendance at the demonstration, but a National Front meeting held at Conway Hall and the demonstrations would have had a Special Branch officer in attendance. I do not know if Lord Scarman received evidence regarding the demonstrations at Red Lion Square from the SDS. I remember a Special Branch Superintendent giving evidence *in the second part of the inquiry about future recommendations*, but I cannot now remember who that was.

**Any other matters**

80. At this stage there is no other evidence which I am able to give from my knowledge and experience which is relevant to the work of the Undercover Policing Inquiry.



81. I understand that MPS-0748208  
MPS-0733367 might be incomplete and I would be happy to  
MPS-0748210  
answer additional questions about any missing documents in this file, or indeed  
about any other documents relating to A8, should they be located.

**Request for documents**

82. I do not have any documents or other information which is potentially relevant to  
the Inquiry's terms of reference.

**Diversity information**

83. I am a male and white British

I believe the content of this statement to be true.

4

T Speed

Signed: .....

5

10/08/2022

Dated: .....